SKAGIT RIVER GENERAL INVESTIGATION

NEPA PUBLIC MEETING

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

SEATTLE DISTRICT

JUNE 19, 2014

6:31 P.M.

Skagit Station

105 E. Kincaid Street

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

REPORTED BY: Tara L. Cunha, CCR 3310

LIKKEL and ASSOCIATES

MS. WETZLER: Good evening. My name is Lynn 2 Wetzler. We will have a presentation for 30 minutes, and 3 then we will have a comment session from, 7 o'clock to 4 8 o'clock. We'll go over more of the logistics when we get 5 to that portion, but I'd like right to introduce our Deputy б District Engineer, Olton Swanson for the Seattle District.

7 MR. SWANSON: Thanks, Lynn. It's great to see 8 everybody here tonight. I really appreciate folks taking 9 time out of their busy schedules to be here. Thank you for 10 your interest and involvement in the Skagit River Basin 11 General Investigation Study Process. And I also want to 12 give a thanks to representatives from Skagit County, the 13 study's non-federal sponsor. I'd like to recognize Skagit 14 County Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt, and Chairman Ron Wesen, 15 who will speak briefly after I'm through. Sharon Dillon 16 couldn't be with us tonight.

17 Additionally, I'd like to recognize our (inaudible) 18 representative (inaudible) Tom Buclet from (inaudible) 19 Representative, Julien Loh from Representative DelBene's 20 office, and Joe Downes from Senator Cantwell's office. So I 21 appreciate you all being here as well.

22 We're here tonight because we understand the 23 importance of providing flood risk management to the lower 24 Skagit River Basin to reduce flood risk and potential 25 damages from flooding. The Corps is committed to the study,

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the plan may be modified based on your input. Tonight we will provide an update on the status of the study and you will hear more specifics on how the plan addresses flood risk management in the Basin. The members of our Project Team from the Corps, the project sponsors, and other stakeholders have worked hard on this project. We've come tonight to hear your comments and obtain your input on this important study. The team will consider your thoughts as it continues to aggressively pursue completion

of this study. It's significant that in an era of declining

federal budgets, this study continues to be funded and move

11 I invite you to personally review the plan which is 12 available online and at local libraries, and to provide us 13 your input. The plan is undergoing a number of concurrent 14 reviews, including the public review and comment period, and 15

7 safety, and economic damage, but the plan we selected stood 8 out because of the lower construction, operations and 9 maintenance costs, as well as the lowest -- having the 10 lowest impact to agricultural lands.

Plan which you will hear more about tonight. All of the

alternatives that were considered reduced threats to life,

1 and will continue working side by side with our Skagit 2 County partners to complete it, and address flood risk 3 management in the lower Basin.

The study team has identified a Tentatively Selected

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1 forward towards recommending a flood risk reduction plan for Congressional authorization.

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3 I'd also like to add that those projects that have 4 found success in the recent past in the federal system have 5 been those that have had an aligned local community. And if 6 we aren't there yet, it's something we hope to address so we 7 can continue our work and move forward. Congress determines 8 which projects are funded, and your representatives have a 9 say in that process. Communities that are aligned send a 10 clear message to your representatives that this project is 11 important to the Skagit County community.

12 We're here to listen and collect your comments and 13 questions tonight. We want to be thoughtful and considerate 14 in our responses, so we'll not look to provide responses 15 tonight. We will take some time to evaluate them, your 16 questions and comments, and include responses in our final 17 report.

18 Every comment will be considered as we move forward. 19 We invite you to share your thoughts with us and urge you to 20 provide each speaker with an opportunity to present his or 21 or her views uninterrupted during the time limit we have 22 set. My expectation is that you will each help to foster a 23 safe, civil, and respectful setting for everyone here this 24 evening. Thank you once again for your interest and 25 commitment to address flooding in the Skagit River Basin.

And now I'd like to turn it over to Chairman Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner, for his opening remarks.

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3 MR. WESEN: Thank you very much. It's really nice 4 to have this good crowd here tonight. We have come a long 5 way over the years on this Skagit River Investigation Study, 6 and we are getting closer to the end of the project. And I 7 really want to appreciate the Army Corps, all the work 8 they've done here, all the county staff, all our group off 9 workers that we've had on this project as it's gone forward, 10 our dike districts, our grading districts, all the local 11 people involved. And what we're here tonight to do is to 12 comment on the project. It looks like that has gone towards 13 the top of the list and we need to look at those things. 14 And once again, thank you for being here. Put your comments 15 in so the Army Corps will be able to come back and make 16 comments on your comments, and so we can have a good project 17 going forward.

18 I also want to thank our legislative and 19 congressional, and our senators who have helped out on this 20 project all long. Without their expert help to get this 21 thing --- being one of the first projects to go through this 22 special program, we wouldn't have gotten where we have. 23 Let's get this done tonight. Thank you. 24

MS. WETZLER: Thank you. So following this 25 presentation, as I mentioned earlier, there will be an

1 opportunity for comments on the draft and feasibility report 2 and environmental impact statements. The comment period 3 ends on the 21st of July. If you're interested in 4 commenting tonight, please make sure you're signed up to do 5 There's a sign-up sheet over on the table that you so. 6 walked by when you checked in. And as we mentioned, tonight 7 is an opportunity to provide comments, but it's not a Q and 8 A time. And if you're not interested in speaking tonight, 9 there's other ways to comment, and I'll go over those 10 towards the end of the presentation.

11 The Skagit River General Investigation Project is a 12 single-purpose flood risk management study with objectives 13 of reducing damages, protecting population in the Basin, as 14 well as protecting critical infrastructure such as schools, 15 hospitals, and pipelines. The existing levee system 16 provides approximately 4 to 5 percent annual chance of 17 exceedance [sic] or 20 to 25 year level of protection. In 18 tonight's presentation I will use level of protection 19 terminology; however, when you read the report or if you 20 look through it, you'll notice that we used the annual chance exceedance [sic] terminology. 21

22 Flood fight efforts have previously prevented 23 damages, although they are risky and unreliable ways to 24 provide long-term protection. The Tentatively Selected Plan 25 will be presented tonight, and that milestone is the second

of five planning milestones in the Corps study process. The
 process is a routine that has made a recommendation of the
 plan which was the proposed plan forward to address flood
 risk in the Skagit River Basin.

⁵ The Integrated Draft Feasibility Report ⁶ Environmental Impact Statement is out now, the 45-day ⁷ national Environmental Policy Act Public Review, as well as ⁸ the concurrent reviews conducted by the Corps, Agency ⁹ Technical Review, and then also an Independent External Peer ¹⁰ Review which is outside of the Corps of Engineers.

This is an opportunity to provide input on the draft report. The draft report discusses the planning process, the process of developing potential solutions to reduce flood risk in the Basin, including evaluating those flood risks, formulation, and screening of potential alternatives.

¹⁶ Comments received during the concurrent review ¹⁷ period will be taken into consideration to inform the ¹⁸ feasibility level design, and updates in the final report, ¹⁹ which is when you'd see responses to comments submitted ²⁰ during the current comment period.

The study area is shown here. And the study area is a large area spanning several counties in western Washington. The project areas focuses on the lower Skagit River Basin located within the floodplain and the Baker River Hydroelectric Project. The line is a little bit 1 faint, but roughly that is the project area. And there is a handout of this map in the back if you would like to take it with you.

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4 The draft report tells the planning story of 5 measures were developed and then also two alternatives. We б developed more than 20 management measures that could 7 address flood risk in the Basin and combined and assembled them into alternatives to address flooding. At the last 8 9 public meeting, which was in the Spring of 2012, the 10 preliminary array of alternatives was presented. Since 11 then, together with the County, we have refined the 12 alternatives to the Final Array and identified the 13 Tentatively Selected Plan.

14 The Final Array of Alternatives are: The No Action 15 Alternative, which is if no federal action was taken; the 16 Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement Alternative, which is 17 improvement to existing urban levees and some new levees. 18 So the key here shows some of the levee work that would be 19 done. This is an overlay of all alternatives with obviously 20 the exception of the No Action Alternative.

21 The Joe Leary Bypass Slough is in the Final Array. 22 It is an outlet here. That will be a bypass channel too, 23 Padilla Bay, and then putting this bypass down here with an 24 output to the Swinomish Slough.

All of the alternatives in the Final Array include

improvements to existing levees, as well as some new levees, and then for the bypasses, additional earthwork to construct the bypasses.

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4 For comparison purposes to the Final Array of 5 Alternatives, a 100-year event was used to compare and to б evaluate as conceptual level designs to identify the 7 Tentatively Selected Plan. The Final Array of Alternatives 8 are complete and stand-alone alternatives; however, measures 9 can be added to the alternatives that could provide 10 additional benefit. And in this case, the Baker Dam 11 Operational Modification Measure and Non-Structural Measure, 12 which is tasks such as elevating and raising structures, 13 buyouts, flood-proofing, and early warning systems, can be 14 added to any of the Final Array of Alternatives. The Final 15 Array of Alternatives were evaluated and compared, using 16 criteria -- a range of criteria, but some that I want to 17 specifically point out this evening is ensuring that the 18 alternative that reduces flood risk to urban areas, least 19 adverse impacts to agricultural resources, environmental 20 resources, real estate impacts, and which alternative is the 21 least costly to construct. These are some of the criteria 22 that were used to identify the Tentatively Selected Plan, 23 which essentially best meets the study objectives. 24 The Tentatively Selected Plan that has been 25 identified is the Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement

1 Alternative, which most cost-effectively meets the 2 objectives of reducing flood risk damages and risk to life 3 and safety. This alternative would provide flood risk 4 reduction for urban areas of Burlington and Mount Vernon by 5 improving and raising existing levees along the Skagit River 6 and constructing two new levees to the Burlington Hill Cross 7 Levee located here, and the Riverbend Cutoff Levee here, as 8 well as a flood wall at the Lyman's Park located right 9 there.

10 The current conceptual design assumes no 11 modification to bridges in the Basin. This alternative, as 12 I mentioned it, provides protection to the urban areas of 13 Burlington and Mount Vernon, as well as schools and fire 14 stations in the Sedro-Woolley Wastewater Treatment Plant, 15 and the United General Hospital. Again, this is a complete 16 and stand-alone alternative; however, the proposed plan does 17 include non-structural measures, as well as the Baker Dam 18 Measure, which provides early seasonal flood storage at 19 Upper Baker Dam. So we will be providing flood storage one 20 month earlier starting on October 15th, and flood storage at 21 Lower Baker Dam from October 15th to March 1st. So the 22 similar time frame as the Upper Baker. This is consistent 23 with Article 107 A & B in the Federal Energy Regulatory 24 Commission for the Settlement Agreement for the Baker River 25 Project.

The Baker Dam measure would provide some incremental 2 flood protection to areas upstream of Burlington and Mount Vernon, with reduced flows and stages downstream of the Skagit-Baker River confluence.

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5 Our analysis shows the Comprehensive Urban Levee б Improvement Alternative is the least environmentally 7 damaging among the Final Array. In addition to the 8 environmental analysis that has been conducted, we conducted 9 economic analysis. After identifying the Tentatively 10 Selected Plan, we evaluate to determine the National 11 Economic Development Plan. The federal objective is to 12 contribute to the nation's economic development, which 13 determines the Federal interest. We hope to reasonably 14 maximize net benefits or damages that are avoided from the 15 floods and where the benefits are greater than the costs.

16 Once the Tentatively Selected Plan was identified, 17 we looked at three scales of that Comprehensive Urban Levee 18 Improvement Alternative. So three levels of protection, if 19 you will. We evaluated and analyzed those to identify the 20 National Economic Development Plan. So next look at the 21 three scales of the Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement 22 Alternative, which are tentatively selected plans to 23 identify the National Economic Development Plan. We looked 24 at the 75-year level of protection, 100-year level of 25 protection, and 250-year level of protection. The scales

1 include same project features with different levee 2 elevations that provide that level of protection. The table 3 shows the future without project annual damages that can be 4 expected without a project. Also shown is the expected 5 annual damages with the project, and damages prevented with б the project, also know as the benefits. Damage will reduce 7 by approximately half with the Comprehensive Urban Levee 8 Improvement Alternative, with protection to urban areas of 9 Burlington and Mount Vernon, and costs for the alternative 10 range from 203 to \$228 million.

11 Costs were annualized and compared to annualized 12 benefits. Net benefits are the annual benefits minus the 13 annual costs. Alternatives that reasonably maximized net 14 benefits contribute to National Economic Development, and 15 are recommended for Federal participation. The 250-year 16 Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement Alternative maximizes 17 net benefits and result in a greater benefit-cost ratio at 18 1.9 -- see in the gray box here -- and is the National 19 Economic Development Plan that we have identified.

Further analysis will be conducted to the feasibility-level design phase to look at the use of non-structural measures to offset transferred and residual risks. Once the National Economic Plan is determined, the environmental impacts of the plan are considered and evaluated. This slide shows resources analyzed for the

environmental consequences in the draft report. As
 mentioned earlier, the Final Array of Alternatives were
 designed at a conceptual level for the 100-year event, and
 these resources were analyzed based on those 100-year
 conceptual designs.

6 For each resource, climate change, and/or sea level 7 change were evaluated where appropriate. Typically the 8 approach was how climate change would affect the project in 9 relation to the future without project condition. We strive 10 to use existing information and best professional judgment 11 where possible to establish the existing condition and 12 No-Action Alternative, as well as for analyzing and 13 evaluating potential direct, indirect, and cumulative 14 effects of the Final Array of Alternatives. The assessment 15 of environmental effects is based on comparison of three 16 action alternatives to the No-Action Alternative consistent 17 with the National Environmental Policy Act. And there are 18 two posters in the back of the room that have a little bit 19 more detail about the environmental analysis that was 20 conducted, and then in the report there is much greater 21 detail as well.

The Corps six-step planning process and the National Environmental Policy Act process are in sync for Corps studies. For Corps planning studies there are five milestones that a project successfully achieve to put a 1 feasibility report to Congress for authorization of a 2 project. The Skagit project has achieved the first two 3 milestones, the Alternatives Milestones in August 2012, and 4 the Tentatively Selected Plan milestone earlier this year. 5 We are working towards the third milestone, the Agency б Decision Milestone where, we seek Corps Agency concurrence 7 on the plan to move forward with the feasibility-level 8 design.

⁹ Right now we are in the public and concurrent review ¹⁰ period. The 45-day public review and comment period was ¹¹ initiated on the 6th of June. Public comments are due on ¹² the 21st of July, and comments will be considered and could ¹³ modify the plan to move forward to the feasibility-level ¹⁴ design.

15 As we work forward to the next milestone, the Agency 16 Decision Milestone, we'll look for concurrence on the plan 17 to move forward to feasibility-level design and make 18 appropriate changes or updates to the Integrated Draft 19 Feasibility Report Environmental Impact Statement. The 20 feasibility-level design will be initiated following 21 concurrence on that plan which we will move forward with 22 feasibility-level design on. And we would be seeking to 23 complete feasibility-level design in 2015 with our final 24 report also completed in 2015, so that we can get the report 25 to Congress seeking authorization of the project.

1 The National Environmental Policy Act encourages 2 citizens to participate in public hearings, scoping 3 meetings, comment periods, like we're having tonight, where 4 you can submit your comments, written or orally. Public 5 involvement is a very important to the NEPA process. It's 6 an opportunity for the public to participate in a federal 7 decision-making process and direct an agency's attention to 8 the community's concern.

9 In August 2011 a Notice of Intent scoping meeting 10 was held, and comments from that meeting were taken into 11 consideration during the alternatives formulation and 12 process and the comparison and evaluation of them. This is 13 another opportunity for you to review the work we've done 14 and our analysis conducted by the County and the Corps, and 15 provide comments and inputs on the Integrated Draft Report. 16 We expect to have the final report in 2015, and that report 17 is where you would see responses to comments that are 18 submitted during the current comment period.

19 The draft report is available online. The link is 20 here, but we also have business cards on the table that you 21 signed in on. It's also available in the Mount Vernon, La 22 Conner, and Burlington County libraries as well as the 23 Skagit County Office.

2.4 So I'll go through the procedure on how we're going 25 to go through the comments tonight. There's a couple ways

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1 you can submit them. If you're interested in signing up 2 tonight, I know that we have several individuals who have 3 already signed up. We will go through those in the order 4 that the names are written. We also have comment forms in 5 the back. You can e-mail us your comments, write them in, 6 or present them tonight.

7 If you've already signed up, you will be called to 8 come to the microphone in the order you signed up. Please 9 state and spell your name when you come to the microphone 10 prior to providing your comment. You will have three 11 minutes. We have a court reporter who will be documenting 12 all the comments tonight, and they will be included in the 13 final report. Tonight's comment period will promptly end at 14 8:00 p.m. Evan Lewis will facilitate the comment period and 15 Kera Simons (ph) will keep time. She will -- Kera will hold 16 up a yellow sign when there's one minute remaining, and then 17 a red card when the three minutes is up. So Evan.

18 MR. LEWIS: Sure. So I ask that you come up to the 19 mic so that the court reporter can get -- can hear and see, 20 and also so that everybody else can hear. So I'll name the 21 current person and the person that is next. And we'll start 22 off with John Roozen and the next is Darrin Morrison.

23 MR. ROOZEN: How come I have to be first. My name 24 is John Roozen, R-O-O-Z-E-N. I live at --

THE COURT REPORTER: I can't hear you, sir. I'm

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I need you a little closer to the mic. sorry.

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2 MR. ROOZEN: I'm John Roozen. I'm a farmer in 3 Skagit County, and I farm at 16031 Beaver Marsh Road with my 4 brothers. And a few of my comments tonight are going to be 5 very simple, but sometimes that's important for me as I 6 build the foundation in my mind. This first little part 7 might not be accurate, but it helps me to form what's 8 happening.

9 So if they take this river and it's 3,000 feet 10 roughly from the point of origin down to the mouth, and 11 2,700 feet of that is to about Rockport or Concrete, 12 something like that, it doesn't matter. So it makes no 13 difference what we do down here. We're going to get wet. 14 We are going to get very wet because as it slows down in 15 this last 300 feet and then it gets less and less, and 50 16 feet or so down here in the Basin. We're going to get wet 17 if we do nothing. We're going to get wet, some of us, if we 18 do this. So having said that, I think this is an 19 unbelievably exciting moment that we are going to make some 20 improvements in the flood situation in Skagit County.

21 Having said that, I know it's virtually impossible 22 to protect everyone. The amount of money that it would take 23 to protect the whole valley would be beyond what we could 24 afford. So having said that, a certain amount of the water 25 is going to overflow. The overflowing parts of water is

1 going to affect some of us and agriculture, and in some other places whether it's land, crops, or buildings, or whatever it doesn't matter. So the important part of that is what goes -- we sometimes say what goes in must go out, but in this situation, what goes out of the river must go out fast.

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7 So I hope that in the design you're taking into 8 consideration what is out there which is a world-class 9 drainage system which is draining up to 50, 60,000 acres, 10 30,000 acres of this valley could go under in a limited 11 amount of time. So it's draining that every single day. 12 You're going to ask it to do more. So I hope you're going 13 to analyze how it's -- the water is going to go out to this 14 tide as you let it go out of the river. That's very 15 important to us and we need to know that before we go into 16 So then you take where that water is going to go, it. 17 whether it's zero on a hot day in the winter -- or summer, 18 or it's more and more and you give it more and more. We 19 need to improve those discharges. They're already there 20 now. They work very well, but they're going to have to work 21 better. So where the tide gates are right now and where the 22 system goes out right now, needs to be improved. Having 23 said that, if you don't put all the water in one of those, 24 try to distribute it evenly and I don't know if you are, but 25 every one of those taking a little, the old theory of many

hands make light work, would be awesome.

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2 Now, I will say it's built and it's working and you 3 told us that, and it's leveeing [sic] and everything is 4 good. What's the most important part that happens next. 5 That the part that goes -- that stays in the river that goes 6 out, doesn't get worse and worse every year. So if I stand 7 on the North Fork Bridge right now or go anywhere my 8 motorcycle went when I was 15 years old in 1965, when the 9 river had no trees and it flowed bank to bank wide open --10 go on the North Fork Bridge right now, stand there and look 11 at how choked it is. As the trees grow in, it gets worse 12 and worse and worse. As it gets worse and worse, it's going 13 to overflow on us more. So it all goes back to the critical 14 part of how you're going to deal with the overflow that's 15 going to go on in the rest of the land. And in the process 16 of doing that, we would protect the life and property and 17 everything in the best way possible. 18 So there's a couple comments I have on taxing and 19 stuff, but I don't think that's what this is about. 20 MR. LEWIS: Certainly you can submit them in 21 writing. 22 MR. ROOZEN: I can do that. Thank you. 23 MR. LEWIS: I just want to make one more comment.

There is cord here, so if you're coming from that side,

25 please watch your step when you are coming and going.

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Page 20 1 Darrin Morrison is next followed by --2 MR. MORRISON: I don't have anything to add. 3 MR. LEWIS: Okay. Dan O'Donnell is next followed by 4 Marv Pulst. 5 MR. O'DONNELL: I'll send in by e-mail. 6 MR. LEWIS: Okay. Marv Pulst followed by John 7 Shultz. 8 MR. PULST: My name is Marv Pulst, P-U-L-S-T. I'm 9 the Director of Public Works for the City of Burlington. 10 The City of Burlington is delighted that the Corps has 11 produced the Tentatively Selected Plan after years of study, 12 discussion on the issue of flood threats in the Skagit 13 Valley. The Draft Feasibility Report is thorough and gives 14 the reader an appreciation of why the General Investigation 15 Study has been years in the making. 16 Solving the flood threat in the Skagit Valley may 17 seem to be simply a huge engineering task engaging our civil 18 and hydraulics engineering skills, but this report 19 demonstrates that it's much more than that. Careful 20 consideration has been given to environmental issues as 21 demonstrated in our slideshow earlier. Public safety, 22 regional economy, cultural issues to the habitat, 23 agriculture, et cetera, very thorough. 24 The City of Burlington applauds the selection of the 25 Comprehensive Urban Levee Improvement option. This approach

Page 21 1 is consistent with the levee improvement project, which the 2 city in Dike District 12 have been independently working on. 3 We are committed to continuing this effort and the District 4 Corps gives us the assurance that we are doing the right 5 thing. We look forward to working towards a common goal б with the Corps and the County. 7 MR. LEWIS: John Shultz followed by John Semrau. 8 Mr. SHULTZ: Before we get started, you have a slide 9 (inaudible.) My name is John Shultz, can you hear me? 10 THE COURT REPORTER: No. I'm sorry. 11 MR. SHULTZ: My name is John Shultz. I'm an 12 attorney for Dike District 1 and Dike District 12. I also 13 helped formed the dike district flood parties in 1, 3, 22, 14 72, and 12. So I've been pretty much engaged in flood 15 control for quite some time. I'll speak on behalf of number 16 1 and number 12, but also really on behalf of all the 17 districts because we've been working for years to form some 18 type of partnership for flood control. We've worked with 19 the County, we've worked with the Corps. The Corps are our 20 best friends up here. We deal --21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: John, can you speak a little 22 louder. A lot of us have been on tractors. 23 MR. SHULTZ: Oh, okay. Sorry. So we've done a lot 24 of work on flood control over the last few years. Now, I 25 was one of the first people to criticize the GI study. It

1 had gone on for 17 years without any resolution. We all 2 pretty much got jaded. We were thinking this day would 3 never come. I'm like John Christian (ph) now. This is 4 awesome. And I actually read through about a 100 pages of 5 the study. And this slide here really tells it all. Now б Dike 12 is doing (inaudible) there's been some dispute, 7 appeal, some criticism, but that's what you have when you 8 have disorganization because over the last 17 years we've 9 had flood projects. When it floods within one or 10 two districts, we'd repair or (inaudible), you know, 11 (inaudible) 99 projects, but it was just mostly the district 12 who were damaged and injured who did it. What this does --13 what the GI study does, is it makes it much bigger not to 14 mention the fact that the Corps pays for it. Of course, 15 they pay 65 percent, we pay 35 percent. But this is just a 16 great day because Dike 12 can have a project that runs for I 17 think about six miles on the river with some improvements by 18 Sterling and down below.

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¹⁹ But looking through the GI study, what this includes ²⁰ is all the other districts. And I'm really quite amazed ²¹ because Dike 1 has problems because, you know, water is ²² going to be given, drainage folks has problems, and the ²³ (inaudible). The Riverbend (inaudible) it has problems. ²⁴ But most importantly up in Sedro-Woolley they had argued ²⁵ against our permit because they felt more water would go in

1 the hospital and the wastewater treatment plant. Well, 2 guess what, see the "H" up there, this has a plan for rain 3 dikes around the hospital, a wastewater treatment plant. We 4 have other levees around the Riverbend area, Dike 1. And so 5 the only way you can get this done is to have a form that we 6 have now, and have an organization that has the money to 7 spend it and do the research. So I applaud the Corps. You 8 guys did a great job, and the County did a great job by 9 shortening this study and getting it done in three years. 10 So we are absolutely on the right track. Whether this can 11 be funded or not, that remains to be a different story. But 12 I think you'll find most, if not all the dike districts, in 13 favor of it.

The drainage districts, I mean, now is the time to respond. Now is the time to comment. Drainage is vitally important and we support you guys since you are going to take more water in. We need to get the water out. So now is the time for everybody to comment because I'm convinced the Corps will address them. So it's a good thing. There's a lot of things to like about this.

MR. LEWIS: John Semrau followed by Sylvia
 Matterand.

MR. SEMRAU: I'm John Semrau, S-E-M-R-A-U. I
 represent Dike 12 as a District Engineer. At this time
 based on our preliminary review of the study, Dike 12

1 supports the efforts of the Corps' Comprehensive Urban Levee 2 Improvement Alternative. We do have a few questions. We 3 have talked to Karen who will being doing additional dialogue including our written comments.

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5 Dike District 12 is kind of unique. We have both б rural and urban levees protected under in this plan. We 7 also has both river levees as well as we have some sea 8 levels. Something that we do have some questions about, you 9 know, is once we exceed that 25-year protection on the 10 river, how are we going to get the water out from the lower 11 end to the floodplain. I'm not sure if that's addressed at 12 this point, but we will put those questions in writing and 13 get those answered.

14 I did want to just mention something from section 15 3.2.1 of the study. That text quotes that the urban regions 16 of Mount Vernon and Burlington accounts for approximately 17 46 percent of the total expected annual damages. On that 18 same page table 3.5, you can also see there that Burlington 19 alone accounts for approximately 38 percent of the total 20 expected damages. This includes about 69 percent commercial 21 and 39 percent of the industrial damage potential within 22 that floodplain. Protection of these community and economic 23 resources to that .4 percent of the annual chance of 24 exceedance [sic] is very important to all of Skagit 25 community. We certainly look forward --

THE COURT REPORTER: Sir, I'm sorry but I missed 2 that whole last part.

3 MR. SEMRAU: Oh, we look forward to the plan moving 4 forward to construction.

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MR. LEWIS: Sylvia followed by Roger Knutzen.

MS. MATTERAND: Sylvia Matterand, M-A-T-T-E-R-A-N-D. 7 I'm from Clear Lake, and congratulations Burlington. You 8 look like the big winners. I think the folks at Clear Lake 9 are not quite there with the folks from Sedro-Woolley. And 10 I have some concerns about some of the infrastructure, 11 particularly the hospital, Highway 9, the schools, the fire 12 district building, the post office, some of my friends and 13 neighbors. I think there's a lot that isn't being 14 considered. And I hope that in this plan that the drainage 15 districts will get a lot more support. And that there is 16 money in place to compensate those who will be having a lot 17 of the damages.

18 I'm disappointed that I feel like this is pitting 19 community against community, and isn't really being 20 supportive of the County. I feel like the city -- and it's 21 pretty obvious if you look at the numbers, Burlington is the 22 big winner. La Conner doesn't even come out that far ahead 23 in this plan. And those of us who live outside the City of 24 Burlington, and who aren't friends with the Corps, and don't 25 meet with them every week or so, are really getting the

short of the stick.

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2	If there's any way that our comments could make any
3	changes, I'd feel better about this, but I've been to other
4	of these meetings, and I've heard other comments and it
5	doesn't seem like it is in consideration.
6	The wall around United General sounds like it's
7	going to pretty much become pretty much ineffective. And I
8	worry also about the nursing home that's on Highway 20.
9	There's another senior housing facility near the hospital,
10	my husband's office, some other businesses around the
11	hospital. So there's still a lot of work to be done. And
12	I'd like the County to take those things into consideration
13	for the final plans. And please give the drainage district
14	the ability to do their job.
15	MR. LEWIS: Next speaker is Annie Lohman.
16	MS. LOHMAN: I don't want to speak.
17	MR. LEWIS: Then Roger Knutzen followed by Bob
18	Helton.
19	MR. KNUTZEN: I'm Roger Knutzen with drainage
20	district 14. I'm one of the three commissioners. Our
21	district was formed in 1890, 125 years ago. And it's been
22	painstaking doing all of the infrastructures that's
23	necessary in order to have that system. We have that system
24	right now, and we're pretty proud of it.
25	There's two things. There's the national disaster
1	

1 and the created disaster. When the Samish River overfloods 2 and there's been (inaudible) to our system, we can accept 3 that. It's a natural diaster. To drainage district 14, 4 this is going to create a disaster because as the water 5 overtops in the Sterling area, this pink line above is going 6 to force it around the topside of the hill, and it's going 7 to put it right into our drainage district. And it comes 8 out and tosses that out to the Business Park, and at that 9 point the Corps project is over. The problem is ours. And 10 I ask the Corps what kind of volumes are they expecting 11 would come into there, and they said that the County has 12 that handled. And I asked the County, and they said they've 13 not looked at it. They have no idea. So it's pass the buck 14 there as far as what kind of volume it might be. But we 15 know it's more volume than we can handle because we are at 16 capacity right now on the Samish River so it's even more.

17 To improve our district it's tough enough to get 18 money from agriculture to improve that. What's even tougher 19 is to get money from the Corps -- to get permission from the 20 Corps of Army Engineers to do these things. I can see for a 21 lot of the county this is a really good project. A lot of 22 the drainage district -- but in my opinion I think that the 23 Corps has thrown Drainage District 14 and the Samish Basin 24 under the bus in order to create this project. Thank you. 25 MR. LEWIS: Bob Helton followed by Dan Lefeber.

MR. HELTON: Bob Helton, 21032 Little Mountain Road. 2 I moved in --

3 MS. WETZLER: We need to wait for the train to pass. MR. HELTON: I thought I solved my problems by 4 5 moving into a 3809 foot altitude in the mountains. After б achieving that, (inaudible) in 1999 about the flood 7 situation as a curious engineer. So I have followed along 8 the old paths that have been followed up until this point. 9 And I agree with all the positive comments that the prior 10 speakers have made.

11 My concern as a teacher, taxpayer on this plan is 12 that there is adequate space to extend a back slope of a 13 higher dike to maintain the protection that is being housed 14 in this plan. And my question to the Corps is basically 15 pretty simple. What level of sea-level rise can we 16 accommodate and still maintain a three-foot reserve levee 17 height over the next 100 years assuming that the sea level 18 doesn't rise too much. But I think we have to know how long 19 our insurance plan is going to last. Thank you.

20 MR. LEWIS: Dan followed by Ed Lipsey. We are 21 getting down towards the end of our speakers. So if anybody 22 would like to add their names, please see Scott and we will 23 get your name on the list.

24 MR. LEFEBER: Dan Lefeber, last name is spelled 25 L-E-F-E-B-E-R. I'm the Operations Manager for Skagit County Dike District 12. I grew up west of Mount Vernon. My
permanent residence is in Sedro-Woolley. I work in
Burlington. My ancestors all, say, three and
four generations of farming in Skagit County, you know,
Bayview, Burlington, Mount Vernon. So I kind of have a feel
for the whole realm of that, I believe.

7 Dike District 12 supports the basic premise of this, 8 the study, the results of it. We know we have to protect 9 the critical infrastructure. And we witnessed -- like when 10 we had the brief gap in Interstate 5 last summer. We know 11 that flooding could do those kinds of things. Certainly all of the freeway and river traffic has increased dramatically. 12 13 It had a lot to do with not just Congress locally, but all 14 around. We all need to be strong everywhere.

15 We need to protect the people we know within our 16 district. That's the main job I'm charged with, but we 17 still, as in every situation in life, I believe need to 18 treat others like we want to be treated ourselves. It's 19 very important. While I say the district supports the 20 context in general, we still reserve the right to review 21 some of the aspects in general because there are some 22 potentials I believe and maybe they cannot be avoided, and 23 all we can do is the best we can do based on all the 24 alternatives. There's probably no perfect solution, but not 25 to back it up any more than we have to on people, and to not

¹ send the water unfairly towards one area versus another. As
² long as we can all share in it and all somehow survive in
³ the more than likely scenarios that will happen in our
⁴ lifetimes.

⁵ It's going to be a hard task, and it will not be ⁶ perfect as many situations in life are not perfect. But we ⁷ need to do the best we can to be considerate of others, work ⁸ hard as a united front, and then I think we might really get ⁹ about as good as we're probably going to do in this lifetime ¹⁰ with the financial wherewithal that we have.

11 I think we need to try and listen to each other and 12 do the best we can. I think the Corps has listened to us, 13 and the process will continue to refine. We need to make 14 sure that the numbers are really explained well to everyone 15 so we know volumes of water, depths, directions, all the 16 potential outcomes. No one deserves to be, let's say, 17 flimflammed on this. Anyway, hopefully we can all work 18 together and get the perfect plan. Thank you.

MR. LEWIS: Ed Lipsey followed by Leonard Halverson.
MR. LIPSEY: Ed Lipsey, 30816 Lyman Hamilton
Highway, Sedro-Woolley. I'm not sure (inaudible) because I
live up quite a ways ahead of all this stuff. And it seems
like we're trying to control the river from the wrong end.
I do like the idea of the upper dams and that kind of stuff.
But one of the things that I've talk to several engineers in

1 the past years is we have a rain problem, and we have a snow 2 problem, and it comes from up there. And anyway living in 3 the area of -- farming in the (inaudible) Islands, of course we get wet and in Hamilton, if you live there, we get wet. 4 5 But one of the engineers told me, he said, when we start 6 working with the weather -- and I asked the question, why 7 are we working with the weather. Well, he says, whenever 8 you see the storm come in if you will drop your -- if you 9 will peak your river up to 28 feet and hold it there, all 10 that storm water goes out, he says then you shut your dams 11 up. He says let it go then. And by doing so he says one of 12 the things that we have here that's never mentioned is we 13 have a flash flood. It's 24 up and 24 down. That's all 14 we've ever had. So I just think that it isn't like it's 15 going to hold all the water. The lower part of this river 16 is filling in from what I heard. And it needs to be 17 loosened up a little bit so it can't escape. And if it can 18 escape, and the dams do their part -- I mean, weather 19 reports come in all the time. Why can't we work with it and 20 use these dams. I was told by one of the Puget Power people 21 a long time ago that these dams are hydroelectric. They're 22 not --23 (Train came through.) 24 MR. LIPSEY: Anyway, I think that working on both 25 ends of this river, the upper and lower, is where we're

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1 going to win if we're going to win at all. Thank you. MR. LEWIS: Leonard Halverson followed by Carol 3 Ehlers.

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4 MR. HALVERSON: Leonard Halverson, 11558 Sterling 5 Road, H-A-L-V-E-R-S-O-N. This project, GI project here, 6 kind of reminds me of a Clint Eastwood film. It's got the 7 good, the bad, and the ugly in it. The good part I'll start 8 on first. We're doing something with the Baker Dams, 9 getting some help up river and Skagit City Light needs to be 10 brought to the table somehow. Nobody got there for their 11 reexamination.

12 The bad, we were basically promised an early warning 13 system in 1975, and again in 1990. I don't see it in the 14 paperwork. I don't see anything for cleaning up the river, 15 things that have been put in it. Goat Island Dike by the 16 Corps fill at the bridge corridor, the three bridge 17 corridor, the river (inaudible) railroad tracks in 18 Burlington, Removal of the wing dike in District 12 and/or 19 excavation at (inaudible) to get the water around the 20 corner.

21 The preferred alternative here for District 12 Dike 22 is the ugly. They've been a problem for 50 years, maybe 23 100, they've passed the water up river, Sterling, 24 (inaudible) Sedro-Woolley, Clear Lake. They passed it down 25 river to all the rest of the dike districts and Fir Island.

1 They have to be made to take water over the top of their 2 district for anything to work as a dike project or as a 3 flood project in Skagit County. They have to take their 4 share. It has to be spread out and evenly distributed. The 5 Fir Island just can't stand it, and neither can the Samish б River Valley. They had a flood out there a few years ago in 7 Samish and they didn't farm all summer up there, just from 8 their own river let alone the Skagit's. Thank you.

9 MR. LEWIS: Carol and then Jason Easton. And Jason 10 is the last person I have recorded so, again, if somebody 11 else would like to speak, please sign up with Scott.

12 MS. EHLERS: Carol Ehlers, E-H-L-E-R-S. You have my 13 address because when I testified at the scoping, you did the 14 right kind of process and sent me a postcard about this 15 meeting. I'd like to compliment you. You're doing so much 16 better than the Navy did a couple of months ago.

17 There is something that I wish you would do. 18 Anacortes is part of the County, but this document isn't in 19 their library. Concrete is part of the County, the document 20 is not in their library. It's a long way to come. And if 21 one person here in Mount Vernon is reading the document, you 22 have wasted (inaudible). And many of us, especially people 23 who work and think like I do, want to a read a paper 24 document so that you can put your finger in one point and 25 another finger in another point and flip back and forth, and

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1 see how this section relates to this section, and why this 2 is proposed when you didn't think it should be, but, oh, 3 this is a new idea.

4 Now, there's a lot of people in this room that have 5 been taking part forever. I think my first light (ph) б community meeting was in 1988. So there's a lot of old 7 faces and we've spent a lot of time, and I never thought we 8 would get here. So that's the third nice thing you can say. 9 As long as you give us the paper copy to read.

10 Now, thank heavens you are finally able to connect 11 one part of the flood protection on the Skagit River, the 12 lower part (ph) and Lyman's Park. I've been trying to 13 figure out why it hasn't been overflowed all these years, 14 and you're going to actually do it. You're also going to 15 protect the senior citizens in Burlington, but as it was 16 brought up, you're not going to protect the senior citizen 17 homes by the hospital in Sedro-Woolley. Now, when New York 18 City didn't bother protecting the seniors, they've gotten 19 sued for it. And they're going to have to pay a fortune 20 because when seniors are in a home, they aren't mobile. 21 They can't get up and drive away. There's no place in the 22 emergency management process in this County to take them 23 anywhere. They're no place to take them. They're working 24 on a National Hazard Mitigation plan now. I don't see any 25 relationship between that document and this one. And you

1 need to have it. You need to be working together because what you do in this, relates to what they do and can do, might do, or can't do. And you've got to help Mark do it. He's got to get it done this summer.

5 So those are the things that someone living well out б of the floodplain -- and pirates knew what floods were 7 because of what my grandfather said back in 1903, you didn't 8 build a house in a floodplain (inaudible.) And thank 9 heavens you're not going to direct all the worst of the 10 water onto the (inaudible) and destroy. I'm so proud of 11 that.

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MR. LEWIS: Jason Easton.

13 MR. EASTON: I want to thank the Corps and the 14 County for the opportunity to speak, but also the 15 opportunity to serve on the Flood Control Zone Advisory 16 District, the longest acronym committee in the history of 17 the County. As the vice chair of that said along with 18 serving with Chairman Darrell here and other members that 19 are here, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in 20 this decision as they were being made not just to comment at 21 the end.

22 And so, you know, as a resident of Anacortes -- and 23 I apologize I didn't tell you where I was from. I'm from 24 Anacortes. For 12 years I lived in Anacortes. For about 25 eight years I've been involved in this issue. And like John

1 said earlier, I started out very skeptical about the GI 2 study. Those who introduced me to being involved in this 3 whole idea of understanding what GI even stood for, and what 4 the Corps was doing and how all this flood stuff worked, we 5 were very skeptical. And the amount of money that is spent б to get to a point of finishing a study, does reinforce at 7 times your skepticism.

8 I will say with respect to the Corps and the County, 9 the resources were quite large. But the results today are 10 better than what we had when we started. And if we 11 implement what's being proposed, we're better than where we 12 were today and where we would be 20 years from now. If we, 13 like other communities, made the mistake of kicking this 14 down the road again -- sometimes the enemy of perfect is 15 good, sometimes the enemy of good is perfect. I think in 16 this case our common enemy is the uncontrolled river at 17 times, but also our common friend. It serves our 18 agriculture community amazingly, serves us with amazing fish 19 and wildlife systems, but it's also a challenge to figure 20 out how to keep everyone protected and safe. We're close.

21 I'm not happy, I'm not extremely excited about what 22 is going to happen to some of these areas. I'm concerned 23 about how the Samish and the Skagit work together to make 24 Highway 20 a real challenge at times. But remember when you 25 protect Burlington and you protect Mount Vernon, you are

1 protecting the economics of the spoken wheel system in this 2 community. Anacortes doesn't -- as they famously tell you, 3 they don't sell socks in Anacortes. They buy them in 4 Burlington and Mount Vernon. And so we continue to work 5 together as a community, find ways to make this thing and б improve this thing. We have a world-class drainage system 7 and amazing agricultural system in an unbelievably beautiful 8 place to live. But if we could do a better job of managing 9 the river when it comes at us hard, we are in much better 10 shape. Thank you.

11 MR. LEWIS: Okay. This is the last speaker I have 12 on my list again. Certainly there is opportunity since 13 there is time left. Oscar Lagerlund.

14 MR. LAGERLUND: Oscar Lagerlund, 19501 Dahlstedt 15 Road, Burlington, Washington. I'm one of the expendables. 16 I live in the Samish River flood zone. Don Nelson (ph) was 17 the Flood Control Engineer for the County, some of you 18 remember him, maybe us old-timers. Once again, I look 19 around and I think I'm the oldest guy in the room. Some of 20 you might argue with that, but if you don't know, I do a lot 21 of hard work and drink a lot of milk and not much whisky.

22 So you said we will never flood the Samish and 23 Skagit at the same time. Well, guess what. In 1990, we 24 did. Both basins were full. The question is when you run 25 it through that Samish Basin and it's full, what happens.

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So the thing that -- I wasn't going to say anything, 2 but then I'm thinking about the dairy farmers. And there's 3 two dairies right where you're proposing to make the dike 4 around Burlington and Industrial Park, and I'm thinking, 5 okay, we're the expendables. Give us a chance to get out 6 alive. Not me, but with the cows. Because I got called at 7 4:50 -- 4:30 in the morning in 1990, and it said evacuate. 8 Have you ever tried to evacuate 600 livestock plus the guys 9 that were down at the organic farm. I said, you know what, 10 make them put the dike on the other side of the organic 11 farms because everybody needs organic, the rest of us, they 12 don't need it. And so those who can survive it, you get 13 your dike on the other side of your farm which is right next 14 Industrial Park. High value, right. What about a buffer 15 for that high value stuff like you talk about buffers for 16 habitats and salmon, and everything else. How about a 17 buffer for a farmer in a flood zone.

18 Now I've been here a long time. These guys are 19 young guys, got two sons with him, an organic farmer. I 20 said, put your dikes way out there so when you get it, tell 21 them you have to stay as an organic farm. So that when you 22 get it, the dike built, then you can sell it for industrial 23 because that was his alternative, to sell out. 24

So that's what a lot of things are looking at. 25 (Inaudible). I fought to preserve egg land. A lot of you

1 know it (inaudible), the whole works. Now I'm asking myself 2 for what. For habitat. My son says we are going to turn it 3 all into swamp, we got the high spots, that's where we will 4 build the houses. Well, that's what they already did. My 5 ancestors sat on (inaudible) Bayview, looked out across the б valley and said, oh, there's a high spot -- this is in the 7 1800s -- there's a high spot, there's a high spot 8 (inaudible), house on it. Hopefully, we are sitting on a 9 high spot where we have our farm, but we don't know because 10 the Army Corps hasn't run a "where's the water going to 11 run." 12 And the other thing is like John Roozen said, if we 13 are going to take the water, help us get it out, because we 14 don't have the structure to let it back out through the 15 dikes. Thank you. 16

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¹⁶ MR. LEWIS: Are there any other people that would ¹⁷ like to speak? Okay. With that, I'll turn it back over to ¹⁸ Lynn.

¹⁹ MS. WETLZER: Thanks everyone. Thanks Evan. Thank ²⁰ you everyone for your comments tonight. Just one last ²¹ reminder about the formal comment period ending on the 21st ²² of July. How to submit comments either written to the ²³ address here, via e-mail to the address here. You can also ²⁴ call the phone number on the screen, and there are comment ²⁵ forms that you'll pass on the table as you leave, as well as

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1	business cards with the location of the document
2	electronically. And it's also available in three libraries,
3	as well as the Skagit County Office. So thank you for
4	coming tonight, and thank you for your interest in this
5	important project.
6	(End of public hearing at 7:41 p.m.)
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Page 41 CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE 2 STATE OF WASHINGTON)) ss. 3 COUNTY OF SNOHOMISH) 4 I, Tara L. Cunha, CCR No. 3310, the undersigned 5 Washington State Certified Court Reporter, pursuant to RCW 5.28.010, authorized to administer oaths and affirmations in 6 and for the State of Washington, do hereby certify: 7 That the foregoing hearing of Skagit River General Investigation Project, Public Meeting was taken before me 8 and completed on June 19, 2014, and thereafter was transcribed under my direction; that the typewritten 9 transcript is a full, true and accurate translation of said hearing; 10 That I am not a relative, employee, attorney or 11 counsel of any party to this hearing, or relative or employee of any such attorney or counsel or person, and that 12 I am not financially interested in the said hearing or the outcome thereof; 13 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand in my office 14 in the County of Snohomish, State of Washington, this 11th day of July, 2014. 15 16 17 18 TARA L. CUNHA, CCR Washington State Certified Court 19 Reporter No. 3310, residing at Lake Stevens, Washington 20 21 22 23 24 25

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